

Whither Nursing?

To the Editor: At a recent meeting of the California Nurses' Association Board of Directors, there was discussion of your editorial, in the December issue of CALIFORNIA MEDICINE.

The CNA Board of Directors found your editorial interesting and provocative. They noted your statements: "The varieties of nurse specialists are growing . . ." [and] "nurses are being expected to make independent decisions. . . ." "One important and perhaps inevitable result . . . is that the nurse . . . has begun to stand more closely with the physician as an assistant, associate or even colleague." "We see nursing leadership making very considerable efforts to identify and define what is now to be the role of nursing." And, "Perhaps the time has come to admit that the specialized registered nurse of today and tomorrow will no longer be a nurse in the traditional sense, and will more than likely be lifted out of the traditional nursing role to take her place among a new order of physician assistants or physician associates." "The need for such an order . . . with various and differing skills is becoming increasingly apparent." And further, "This new category of professional specialists should stand closely with the physician and share his responsibilities for patient care and for community, environmental and species health care. Men would play an equal role with women. Those who achieved this new status might become recognized as 'professional associates in medicine' . . ."

The CNA Board of Directors appreciates your insight and thoughtful review of the problems of the expanding role of the nurse.

At the same meeting, action was taken to adopt a CNA Position on the Expanding Role of the Nurse. [See below.]

MRS. A. LIONNE CONTA
Executive Director

CNA Position on the Expanding Role of the Nurse

The CNA recognizes that health needs arise from a variety of social, cultural and economic as well as physical cases; that changes brought about by scientific and technological discoveries are necessitating new and different methods and practices in the delivery of health

care; and that legislative action reflecting public policy have emphasized the increased demand for health services.

The CNA further acknowledges that the nursing profession must assume responsibility for defining the dimensions of services that can and should be provided by nurses.

The CNA structure provides for participation by nurses in all fields of practice. Interorganizational representation already established provides for cooperative work with related health professions.

Therefore the CNA will urge, promote and encourage defining the expanding role of the nurse, determining adequate preparation and job assignment, and full exploration of added professional and legal responsibility.

Adopted by Board of Directors, CNA, December 6, 1969.

Peer Review

To the Editor: "Peer Review" has been a favorite phrase that recurs in the emanations from various echelons of organized medicine and seems to be highly touted as a remedy for a number of ills that beset medical practice. Like many popular remedies, however, the original bloom of the manufacturer's enthusiasm is eventually dimmed somewhat with the reporting of undesirable side reactions. From what I read, it seems to me that the peer review enthusiasts haven't been reading the package inserts.

I recently had the opportunity to observe the operation of the peer review concept in the form of an inspection of the hospital where I have been practicing for almost twenty years by none less than the Joint Commission on Accreditation. If this is peer review at its best and will cure what's wrong with the patient, I regret to report that it also causes more than a modicum of trauma, tenesmus and tetany in the process. Although this is only a preliminary report to your readers, perhaps some of them have made similar observations and hopefully it may prompt further investigation by suitable committees of CMA.

The paper tiger that inspected us seemed convinced that the only good doctor is a literary one and that a voluminous history full of minutiae guarantees the excellence of the attending physician. That such a notion is patently false must be apparent to anyone who actually handles patients. This obsessive neurosis regarding charts becomes manifest every time their inspector appears and the last such display of papyrophilia was a temper tantrum about family histories in our charts. Sure-